

AMENDMENTSIn the Claims:

*Please amend the claims as follows:*

*Please cancel claim 39, without prejudice to their refiling.*

*Please cancel claims 14-26 as drawn to non-elected subject matter, without prejudice to their refiling.*

1. (Amended) Suturing means for connecting a tubular vascular prosthesis (40) to a ~~[[blood]]~~ vessel (50) in a body, said suturing means comprising an internal, substantially annular member (10) intended to be received inside the ~~[[blood]]~~ vessel and an external annular member (20) intended to be applied around the ~~[[blood]]~~ vessel essentially at the location of the internal annular member, in order to receive ~~[[the]]~~ a vessel wall between both annular members, in which at least one of the two annular members is provided with suturing members (12) which, at least in use~~[[a connected state]]~~, grip in the vessel wall, fixating at least the internal annular member, characterized in that the internal annular member (10), at least in use, ~~[[comprises a ring-like element (10) intended to be firmly connected to an outer end of the vascular prosthesis, that the external annular member and the ring-like element are capable of mutual cooperation so as to clamp the vessel wall there between]]~~ is firmly connected to an extreme end of the prosthesis, in that the internal annular member defines a sealing surface extending substantially continuously over an annular circumference of said internal annular member and in that the external annular member, at least in use, substantially surrounds the internal annular member at least at an area of said sealing surface defined by said internal annular member, clamping the vessel wall there between in a substantially leak free manner.

2. (Amended) Suturing means as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the suturing members (12), at least in ~~[[the connected situation]]~~ use, extend radially from a first of the two annular members (10, 20) and are received in the other of the two annular members (20, 10) in order to effect a firm mutual connection while enclosing the wall of the vascular prosthesis (40) and the vessel wall (50).

3. (Amended) Suturing means as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the first annular member comprises a metal ring (10) with lips (12) which can be pressed radially outward and are provided with sharp protrusions (13), which are capable of penetrating through the wall material of the prosthesis (40), through the wall of the ~~[[blood]]~~ vessel (50) and into the material of the other of the two annular members (20, 10).

4. (Original) Suturing means as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that the protrusions (13) are provided with one or more barbed hooks (14).

5. (Previously Amended) Suturing means as claimed in claim 2 or 3 or 4, characterized in that the suturing members (12) extend from the internal annular member (10) and that the external annular member (20) comprises at least a core of plastic for receiving the suturing members therein.

6. (Amended) Suturing means as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the means also comprise a clamping ring (30) which, at least in use, lies ~~[[is intended to lie]]~~ against an outer wall of the prosthesis (40) essentially at the position of the internal annular member (10), ~~[[and to exert]]~~ exerting at least locally a radially inward directed force.

7. (Original) Suturing means as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that the clamping ring comprises a crimp ring (30) which can permanently decrease in diameter at elevated temperature.

8. (Amended) Suturing means as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the suturing members (12) comprise protrusions (13) which ~~[[extend]]~~ protrude outward from the ~~[[ring-like element]]~~ internal annular member ~~[[on a side thereof directed in a direction toward the blood vessel wall (50)]]~~ and are capable, at least under the influence of a radially directed force, of penetrating at least partially in the ~~[[blood]]~~ vessel wall to ~~[[thus]]~~ anchor the prosthesis (40) ~~[[therein]]~~.

9. (Amended) Suturing means as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the suturing members ~~[[9]]~~(12) comprise a regular pattern of crater-like openings (14), the walls (15) of which form the protrusions (13).

10. (Amended) Suturing means as claimed in any of claims 8 or 9, characterized in that the internal annular member (10) has an inner diameter which is at least practically equal to an outer diameter of the vascular prosthesis (40) and that the internal annular member is intended to lie against an outer wall of the vascular prosthesis.

11. (Amended) Suturing means as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the internal annular member (10) comprises a deformable ring which in a first contracted state has a diameter which falls within the diameter of the ~~[[blood]]~~ vessel (50) and in a second expanded state is able to lie against an inner wall of the ~~[[blood]]~~ vessel.

12. (Amended) Suturing means as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the external annular member (20) comprises a ring which ~~[[is interrupted]]~~ comprises an interruption in at least one position and that at the location of the interruption (21) closing means (22, 23) are provided to mutually connect adjacent ring parts.

13. (Amended) Suturing means as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the external annular member (20) comprises at least ~~[[on a side facing the blood vessel (50)]]~~ internally a regular pattern of cams (24) intended to be received on the vessel wall ~~[[with which the member supports on the blood vessel]]~~, and in that said ~~[[which]]~~ cams mutually leave ~~[[leave mutually]]~~ free interspaces (25), which extend~~[[ing]]~~ over ~~[[the]]~~ a full width of the member.

14. - 26. (Canceled)

27. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis comprising a flexible tubular body (40) of which at least a first end is intended to be connected to a ~~[[blood]]~~ vessel (50), characterized in that the

tubular body is provided on at least the first end with ~~[[an]]~~ the internal ~~[[ring-like element]]~~ annular member (10) of the suturing means as claimed in ~~[[one or more of the]]~~ claim~~[[s]]~~ 1~~[[13]]~~.

28. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 27, characterized in that ~~[[the tubular body is provided on at least the said first outer extreme end with an internal ring-like element of the suturing means as claimed in one or more of the claims 2-7, and that]]~~ at the location of the internal annular member ~~[[ring-like element]]~~ (10) a clamping ring (30) lies clampingly on an outer wall of the tubular body (40) while enclosing the wall of the tubular body.

29. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 27, characterized in that the internal ~~[[ring-like element]]~~ annular member (10) lies on an outer wall of the tubular body (40) via a suitable glue connection.

30. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 27 or 28 or 29, characterized in that a second end of the tubular body (40) is provided with coupling means (70) which are capable of a liquid-tight coupling to a free end of a ~~[[second flexible tubular body]]~~ further vascular prosthesis (80).

31. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 30, characterized in that the coupling means (70) comprise a rigid, tubular coupling element (90) which is firmly connected on a first side to the second end of the tubular body (40) and comprises on a second side ~~[[part]]~~ a tapered portion (91) intended for clampingly receiving ~~[[thereon said end of the second tubular body (80)]]~~ said free end of said further vascular prosthesis (80).

32. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 31, characterized in that ~~[[coupling element (90) is provided at the location of the taper (91) with at least one external, tangentially running]]~~ said tapered portion comprises a rib which extends over at least a part of an outer ~~[[the]]~~ periphery of the tapered portion.

33. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 32, characterized in that the coupling element (90) comprises at the location of the tapered portion (91) at least two external ribs which leave a certain interspace, which interspace is intended for receiving a clamping ring (30) ~~[[at that position]]~~ which fixedly clamps the free end of the ~~[[second tubular body]]~~ further vascular prosthesis (80) onto the tapered portion (91).

34. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 27, characterized in that the tubular body (40) comprises a main leg (45), and at least one side leg (46) between opposite ends of said main leg (45) ~~[[which at least one side leg (46) extends]]~~, and that at least one of the free ends of the tubular body carries either ~~[[a ring-like element]]~~ the internal annular member (10) associated with the suturing means as claimed in ~~[[one or more of the]]~~ claim ~~[[s-1-13]]~~ 1, or ~~[[carries]]~~ coupling means (70) capable of a liquid-tight connection to a free end of a ~~[[second flexible tubular body]]~~ further vascular prosthesis (80).

35. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 34, characterized in that the main leg (45) is provided on either side with ~~[[a ring-like element]]~~ an internal annular member (10).

36. (Original) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 34 or 35, characterized in that two side legs (46) extend from the main leg (45) which are each provided on a free end with coupling means (70).

37. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 27, characterized in that the tubular body (40) comprises a primary leg (47) with a first free end and a second end which divides into at least two secondary legs (48), each providing the tubular body with a further free end, and that at least one ~~[[of the]]~~ free end ~~[[s]]~~ of the tubular body carries either ~~[[a ring-like element]]~~ the internal annular member (10) associated with the suturing means as claimed in ~~[[one or more of the]]~~ claim ~~[[s-1-13]]~~ 1, or ~~[[carries]]~~ coupling means (70) capable of a liquid-tight connection to a free end of a ~~[[second flexible tubular body]]~~ further vascular prosthesis (80).

38. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 37, characterized in that the primary leg (47) is provided on the first free end with ~~[[a ring-like element]]~~ the internal annular member (10) and that secondary legs (48) each carry coupling means (70) on their further free end.

39. Canceled.

40. (Amended) Vascular prosthesis system comprising mutually connectable ~~[[modular]]~~ vascular prosthesis modules ~~[[element]]~~ which each comprise a vascular prosthesis as claimed in claim 27.

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